



Forest
Service

Washington
Office

1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

File Code: 6730

Date: February 1, 2010

Route To:

Subject: Accident Review Board Safety Action Plan on the Willow Helibase Rappel
Accident Fatality

To: Deputy Chief for State and Private Forestry

An Accident Review Board (ARB) was convened on November 12, 2009, to review the safety investigation report of the Willow Helibase Rappel Accident Fatality.

A Forest Service Safety Investigation Team conducted the investigation and presented the Factual Report and Management Evaluation Report to the ARB. The reports were reviewed and approved without revision. A Safety Action Plan (SAP) was developed by the ARB that focused on key items that, when implemented, could help prevent similar mishaps in the future. I approve the ARB's recommendations.

Please review the enclosed SAP and take appropriate steps to ensure completion of each respective action by the assigned date. The Forest Service's Office of Safety and Occupational Health should be notified as each item is completed.

I am directing all Forest Service rope-assisted helicopter insertion/extraction operations for personnel to "stand down" until the ARB recommendations are satisfied and the Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry (SPF), is reasonably certain that the program can perform its mission safely. Once this is accomplished, the Deputy Chief, SPF will formally reinstate these programs.

For further information, please contact Dr. Gary W. Helmer, ghelmer@fs.fed.us or (703) 605-5139.

/s/ Thomas L. Tidwell
THOMAS L. TIDWELL
Chief

Enclosure

cc: Ralph Dorn

